

*Here's a timeless reminder from fundraising professional Gail Perry:*

### Thank you letter DO's

- Be really, really prompt.
- Get the donor's name right.
- Have a high-ranking person personally sign the letter.
- Show some emotion.
- Convey gratitude.
- Wear your heart on your sleeve.
- Refer to how the gift will be used.
- Personalize the salutation: Dear Mr. Smith.
- Send several TY notes from different people.
- Send additional thank you letters from board members.
- Send a TY letter from someone helped by your organization.
- Sign it with a real signature.
- Be positive and upbeat.
- Include a contact name and number if the donor has questions.
- Handwrite it if you know the donor well.
- Begin with an innovative or creative sentence that charms the donor.

### THANK YOU LETTER DON'TS

- Start out with "on behalf of."
- Ask for another gift.
- Use thank you letter jargon: "we are deeply grateful for your continued support"
- Start out with Dear Friend.
- Ask anything else from your donor right now.
- Misspell their name.
- Have errors in grammar, punctuation or misspellings.
- Go on and on. Ditch the verbosity. Do be concise.
- Don't keep "selling."
- Don't re-use copy that you used in the solicitation letter to talk about your programs.
- Don't be formal. Or lofty.
- Don't be vague about how the money will be used.
- Don't sign it yourself if you can get a higher-ranking person to sign it.

### ***One more item to consider...***

I queried our database to find 20 most loyal donors – individuals who had given over a minimum of \$100 every year for 7 to 10 years. I drafted a simple letter of thanks for their continued support, along with an introduction, and a brief survey asking why they had contributed regularly for X number of years, and including a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. All but two responded. Several sent in substantial checks, although I had made no mention of money. Their responses were illuminating. They were poignant and sometimes humorous. And they provided me with inspiration beyond measure. Surveying your supporters doesn't have to be the complex task many professionals will tell you it is. I put together my packet and sent it out in one morning.

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